

REMARKS

In the November 14, 2003 Office Action, claims 1-5 were allowed and claims 6-9 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,159,626 to Baum et al. (Reference C in the November 14, 2003 Office Action). Claim 6 has been canceled and claims 10-12 have been added. Thus claims 1-5 and 7-12 remain in the case. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

Prior Art: U.S. Patent 5,159,626 Baum et al.

The Baum et al patent is directed to a multi-line telephone switching system. As illustrated in Fig. 2, line interfaces 30 are connectable to answering machine 20, voice synthesizer 70, and music source 94 under control of control unit 50. If a call is received while another caller is recording a message on the answering machine, the voice synthesizer asks the caller to hold, and music from the music source is played. When the message is completed, the answering machine is connected to ring generator 80 to begin the process of recording the next caller's message and when the answering machine is ready for the next caller, the appropriate line interface is connected to the answering machine. The exterior of the device is described as including switches 87 for selecting which line interfaces can be connected to the answering machine by the device and indicators 85, 86 to indicate the status of a line interface as (i) connected to the answering machine; (ii) on "hold"; (iii) in use as a telephone; and (iv) not in use.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102 (b)

In item 1 on pages 2-3 of the Office Action, claims 6-9 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as anticipated by Baum et al. In setting forth the rejections, paraphrased claim limitations were followed by citation of lines in columns 3-5 of Baum et al. However, no explanation was provided of how the cited portions of Baum et al. correspond to the preceding limitations. If the arguments set forth below do not result in withdrawal of the rejections, **the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone to arrange an Examiner Interview to explain how the claim limitations are met by the cited portions of Baum et al.**

For example, in the Office Action it is asserted that column 3, lines 42-49 of Baum et al. "discloses the logical connection including acquiring a telecommunication performance feature" (Office Action page 2, lines 10-11). This portion of Baum et al. provides the description of the indicators for each line, as noted above. Nothing in this description seems to have anything to do with "acquiring" and therefore, it is not understood how this portion Baum et al. discloses

what is recited on lines 5-6 of claim 7. Similarly, it is not understood how the description of how different colored and flashing or continuous lights described at column 3, lines 51-56 corresponds to "acquiring a parallel connection configuration" (Office Action, page 2, line 12, and claim 7, line 8), or how the statement "[t]he unit 10 may be provided with indicators 85, 86 thereon (see FIG. 2) which indicate various operation conditions thereof" (Baum et al. column 3, lines 40-42) discloses "transmitting the logical message to a processing unit" (Office Action page 2, lines 13-14 and claim 7, last two lines). Therefore, until an explanation is provided, it is submitted that claim 7 and claims 8 and 9 which depend therefrom, patentably distinguish over Baum et al. In addition an explanation is respectfully requested regarding how the limitations recited in claims 8 and 9 are disclosed by the portions of Baum et al. cited in the Office Action.

New Claims

Claim 10 has been added to recite a method for performing the operations performed by the peripheral control unit recited in claim 1, and claim 11 has been added to recite the operations performed by the master subscriber control unit and subsidiary subscriber control unit, as recited in claim 2. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 10 and 11, and claim 12 which depends from claim 11, patentably distinguish over Baum et al. for the reasons recognized by the Examiner in indicating that claims 1 and 2 were allowable.

Summary

It is submitted that Baum et al. does not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 1-5 and 7-12 are in a condition suitable for allowance. Reconsideration of the claims, and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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